

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (Currently amended): A method for obtaining postage comprising:
2 accessing a first server;
3 receiving hypertext information from said first server, said hypertext information
4 including postage-related content;
5 displaying said hypertext information;
6 detecting user input indicating selection of said postage-related content; and
7 in response to said detecting, receiving from said first server information for
8 printing an indicium that originates from a second server;
9 wherein said first server and said second server, each is configured as a web
10 server, whereby said first server and said second server can communicate over the world wide
11 web.

1 2. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said detecting includes
2 transmitting said user input to said first server.

1 3. (Original): The method of claim 1 further including printing said
2 information for printing an indicium on a printable medium.

1 4. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein said receiving said
2 information for printing an indicium includes receiving a printing software component, said
3 printing including executing said printing software component.

1 5. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein said printing is initiated in
2 response to said receiving said information for printing an indicium, absent user intervention.

1 6. (Original): The method of claim 3 wherein said printing is initiated in
2 response to a user request to print said information for printing an indicium.

1 7. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said information for printing
2 an indicium is a bitmap image.

1 8. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said information for printing
2 an indicium is postage indicium data.

1 9. (Original): The method of claim 1 further including selecting a
2 background image, said background image to be combined with said information for printing an
3 indicium.

B' 1 10. (Original): The method of claim 1 further including sending a background
2 image to said first server, said receiving said information for printing an indicium including
3 incorporation of said background image to said information for printing an indicium.

11. (Canceled)

1 12. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein said second server is a postal
2 server.

1 13. (Currently amended): A computer program product for obtaining postage,
2 comprising:

3 code ~~for~~ configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of accessing a
4 first server;

5 code ~~for~~ configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of receiving
6 hypertext information from said first server, said hypertext information including postage-related
7 content;

8 code ~~for~~ configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of displaying
9 said hypertext information;

10 code for configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of detecting user
11 input indicating selection of said postage-related content;
12 code for configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of receiving
13 from said first server information ~~for~~configured to operate a data processor to perform a step of
14 printing an indicium that originates from a second server, in response to said detecting; and
15 a computer-readable medium for storing said codes-₁
16 wherein the second server is configured as a web server.

1 14. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said code
2 for detecting includes code for transmitting said user input to said first server.

1 15. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 further including
2 code for printing said information for printing an indicium on a printable medium.

B
1 16. (Original): The computer program product of claim 15 wherein said code
2 for receiving includes code for receiving a printing software component, said code for printing
3 including code for executing said printing software component.

1 17. (Original): The computer program product of claim 15 wherein said code
2 for printing is initiated in response to receiving said information for printing an indicium, absent
3 user intervention.

1 18. (Original): The computer program product of claim 15 wherein said code
2 for printing is initiated in response to a user request to print said information for printing an
3 indicium.

1 19. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said
2 information for printing an indicium comprises a bitmap image.

1 20. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 wherein said
2 information for printing an indicium comprises postage indicium data.

1 21. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 further including
2 code for receiving a background image from said first server, said background image to be
3 combined with said information for printing an indicium.

1 22. (Original): The computer program product of claim 13 further including
2 code for sending a background image to said first server, said first server combining said
3 background image with said information for printing an indicium.

1 23. (Currently amended): A method for dispensing postage comprising:
2 receiving requests for postage from one or more users at a first server system;
3 communicating with a second server system, including communicating said
4 requests for postage, said second server system providing information for printing indicia; and
5 receiving said information for printing indicia from said second server system,
6 wherein said information for printing indicia is then distributed to said one or more users to
7 satisfy said requests for postage.

8 wherein said second server system is configured as a web server to receive said
9 requests for postage from said first server.

1 24. (Original): The method of claim 23 further including receiving user-
2 provided information from said one or more users relating to a payment mechanism, wherein
3 said requests for postage each includes a user-provided information, wherein said providing
4 information for printing indicia includes verifying payment of said postage based on said user-
5 provided information.

1 25. (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein said user-provided
2 information is credit card information.

1 26. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said requests for postage
2 each includes a payment mechanism associated with said first server system, wherein said

3 providing information for printing indicia includes verifying payment of said postage based on
4 said payment mechanism.

1 27. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said information for printing
2 indicia comprises one or more bitmap images.

1 28. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said information for printing
2 indicia comprises one or more postage indicium data.

1 29. (Original): The method of claim 23 further including providing
2 background image information for enhancing said information for printing indicia.

1 30. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said communicating is based
2 on XML protocols.

1 31. (Original): The method of claim 23 wherein said second server system
2 transmits a postage printing software component to said first server system.

1 32. (Currently amended): A computer-readable medium containing computer
2 instructions that controls arranged to operate a computer system to dispense postage to users by
3 performing the method steps of, by:

4 receiving requests for postage from one or more of said users;
5 communicating with a web server system, including communicating said requests
6 for postage, said server system providing information for printing indicia; and
7 receiving said information for printing indicia from said web server system,
8 wherein said information for printing indicia is then distributed to said one or more users to
9 satisfy said requests for postage.

1 33. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further containing
2 instructions to control said computer system to include, with each of said requests for postage, a
3 user-provided payment mechanism, wherein said providing information for printing indicia
4 includes verifying payment of said postage based on said user-provided payment mechanism.

1 34. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 33 further containing
2 instructions to control said computer system to receive information relating to said user-provided
3 payment mechanism from said one or more users.

1 35. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 34 wherein said
2 payment mechanism is a credit card.

1 36. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further containing
2 instructions to control said computer system to include, with each of said requests for postage, a
3 payment mechanism associated with said first server system, wherein said providing information
4 for printing indicia includes verifying payment of said postage based on said payment
5 mechanism.

1 37. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 wherein said
2 information for printing indicia comprises one or more bitmap images.

1 38. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 wherein said
2 information for printing indicia comprises one or more postage indicium data.

1 39. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further containing
2 instructions to control said computer system to provide background image information for
3 enhancing said information for printing indicia.

1 40. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further including
2 instructions for communicating with said second server system using XML protocols.

1 41. (Original): The computer-readable medium of claim 32 further including
2 instructions for receiving from said second server system a postage printing software component.

1 42. (Currently amended): A method for distributing postage comprising:
2 providing a first server system configured as a web server;
3 providing a second server system configured as a web server;

4 receiving, at said first server system, requests for postage from users;
5 sending said requests for postage to said second server system, including
6 providing a payment mechanism to pay for said postage;
7 dispensing postage from said second server system to said first server system,
8 including validating payment for said postage based on said payment mechanism; and
9 distributing said postage from said first server system to satisfy said requests for
10 postage.

1 43. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said requests for postage
2 each includes a user-provided payment mechanism.

1 44. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said requests for postage
2 each includes a payment mechanism associated only with said first server system.

B 1 45. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said distributing said postage
2 is a step of transmitting information for printing one or more indicia to said users.

1 46. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said first server system is
2 separate from said second server system.

1 47. (Previously presented): The method of claim 42 wherein said dispensing
2 postage includes sending a postage request from said first server system to said second server
3 system.

1 48. (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein said postage request is based
2 on a single request for postage.

1 49. (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein said postage request is based
2 on more than one request for postage.

1 50. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said distributing said postage
2 includes transmitting a postage printing software component.

1 51. (Previously presented): The method of claim 42 wherein said second
2 server is a postal server.

1 52. (Original): The method of claim 42 wherein said second server system
2 dispenses postage in the form of information for printing one or more indicia.

1 53. (Original): The method of claim 52 wherein said information for printing
2 one or more indicia comprises one or more bitmap images.

1 54. (Original): The method of claim 52 wherein said information for printing
2 one or more indicia comprises postage indicium data.

1 55. (Original): The method of claim 52 further including providing one or
2 more background images for selection by said users; said distributing said postage including
3 combining one or more selected ones of said background images with said information for
4 printing one or more indicia.

1 56. (Currently amended): A system for distributing postage to plural users,
2 comprising:

3 a postal server system comprising a web server component;

4 a first server system separate from said postal server system and in
5 communication therewith over a data communication network; and

6 a second server system separate from said postal server system and in
7 communication therewith over said data communication network,

8 said first and second server systems each configured to receive postage requests
9 from users for purchasing postage,

10 said first and second server systems each further configured to send requests to
11 said postal server system to obtain postage from said postal server system, wherein said web
12 server component receives said requests,

13 said first and second server systems each further configured to transmit said
14 postage to said users, thereby satisfying said postage requests.

1 57. (Original): The system of claim 56 wherein said postage comprises
2 information for printing indicia.

1 5958. (Renumbered): The system of claim 57 wherein said information for
2 printing indicia comprises postage indicium data.

1 6059. (Renumbered): The system of claim 57 wherein said information for
2 printing indicia comprises bitmap information.

B 1 6160. (Renumbered): The system of claim 56 wherein said first server system is
2 configured to include a user-provided payment mechanism in its requests to obtain postage.

1 6261. (Renumbered and Currently amended): The system of claim 61-60
2 wherein said payment mechanism is a credit card.

1 6362. (Original): The system of claim 56 wherein said first server system
2 includes a payment mechanism, said first server system configured to include said payment
3 mechanism in its requests to obtain postage, said payment mechanism being associated with said
4 first server system.

1 6463. (Original): The method of claim 56 wherein said data communication
2 network includes a secure communication channel.

1 6564. (Renumbered and Currently amended): The method of claim 64-63
2 wherein said secure communication channel is based on a data transmission protocol, including
3 XML protocol.

1 6665. (Renumbered and Currently amended): The method of claim 64-63
2 wherein said secure communication channel is a land line.